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RUEHDO/AMEMBASSY DOHA 0230
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0279
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NOUAKCHOTT 000654

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [KMCA](#) [MR](#)

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH FORMER ECON MINISTER VEZZAZ --
WELCOMES MCC VALIDATION OF PERFORMANCE, FNDD CONCERNS ABOUT
QATAR

REF: A. NOUAKCHOTT 639

[1](#)B. NOUAKCHOTT 637

Classified By: CDA Dennis Hankins for reasons 1.4 (b and d)

[1](#)1. (C) MCC Scorecard A Validation Of Abdallahi Policies: Charge met November 5 with former Minister of Economy and Finance (and current FNDD economic director) Abderrahmane Ould Hama Vezzaz who had been the Mission's principal ministerial counterpart in the development of Mauritania's MCC Threshold Proposal. Charge shared the soon-to-be-released MCC 2009 Scorecard that shows significant improvement in Mauritanian scores under then-Minister Vezzaz' tenure. The MCC Scorecard indicated substantial jumps in Mauritania's relative scores for Immunization Rates (from 14th percentile to 27th), Girls' Education Completion rates (22nd to 41st percentile), Control of Corruption (68th to 78th percentile -- reversing a steady slide in this indicator), and Business startup (48th to 81st percentile). As Vezzaz was well aware, the MCC scorecard has a lag time built in such that the 2009 report indicates the results of the first year of the Abdallahi Government rather than the performance of the current junta. Vezzaz was pleased to hear that the Embassy plans to issue a press release in conjunction with the public release of the MCC Scorecards to emphasize that the Abdallahi Government policies were showing positive results. Vezzaz said the FNDD will also use the MCC results to counter regime charges of policy mis-management as the FNDD begins to deploy speakers to the interior next week.

[1](#)2. (C) Concerns about Doha: Vezzaz told Charge the FNDD is extremely concerned about the Qatari mediation effort (REFTEL B). Vezzaz had participated in the Qatari-based Arab Democracy Foundation's meeting with the FNDD. Because the Emir had been extremely supportive of President Abdallahi in the past and because of their substantial future investment interests, Vezzaz said "we couldn't tell them "no" to their initiative." Vezzaz worried however that, while more liberal than most, the Emir is not fundamentally democratic, and is more likely to look for "a deal" than the restoration of democracy. He added, "We are in no hurry just to reach 'a deal.' We want a resolution that will once and for all protect Mauritania from future coups. We cannot accept an arrangement that rewards the coup-makers in any way -- otherwise, it is just a matter of time before they strike again." Vezzaz asked that the U.S. keep in close contact with the Qatari to be sure they don't stray too far from international consensus. Vezzaz was aware President Sarkozy

will be meeting soon with the Emir and had faith he would pass the right message to the Emir (although he worried the Sarkozy entourage might give off softer signals). Vezzaz thought it would be useful for Qatar to send an observer to the November 10 Addis Ababa meeting to ensure they were linked to international consensus. Vezzaz also noted his concern that Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak had last week said he opposes "Western threats and sanctions against Mauritania" on the eve of the Addis meeting (Comment: Mission has seen no press reference to what President Mubarak might have said).

13. (C) U.S. Africa Policy: Vezzaz made a point of thanking the Bush Administration for its consistent and principled position throughout Mauritania's democratic transition and, most especially, in the three months since the coup. He also welcomed the election of Senator Obama saying the President-Elect's "African" ties would make him even more effective in demanding democracy and good governance in Africa. Vezzaz opined that African leaders have always been able to "play the race card" with American governments to be held to a lesser standard -- they will no longer be able to use that gambit.

14. (C) SNIM Director Rebuffs the Regime: Charge asked Vezzaz if he knew what was behind the sudden resignation of national mining company (SNIM) Director General Mohamed Ould Sidi Mohamed Deyahi. Vezzaz said his understanding from SNIM insiders (he emphasized he did not know if his information was 100% correct) was that Deyahi had resigned rather than give into a regime demand to transfer "10s of millions of

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dollars" to support the coup. As reported REFETL A, Vezzaz confirmed that SNIM has managed over the years to maintain budget independence from various Mauritania regimes allowing them to maintain and build a solid commercial base. Vezzaz understood Dehayi had given the military some \$600,000 to appease them, but had told Aziz he could not defend the larger amount. Vezzaz worried that whoever replaces Deyahi will hand over the money just as SNIM needs cash for port, rail, and mine expansion. He saw the risk Aziz will "do a Mobutu" in gutting the most important economic element of the Mauritanian economy.

HANKINS